Research Projects and special Frontline Demonstrations by the Directorate of Rice Research and the Agricultural Universities.

(b) Direct seeding method of sowing sprouted seeds in puddled soil both by broadcasting and line sowing utilizing row seeder has been standardized. Among the varieties evaluated, Vikas, Krishna Hamsa and IET 9994 were found suitable. Direct seedling utilizing these approaches was found to be on par with transplanted crop in yield. Inspite of consumption of slightly more irrigation water, it has several advantages. Direct seeded crop matures earlier by 8—10 days than transplanted one. This practice ensures timely planting and maintenance of optimum population which are important for realizing high yields. Direct seeded crop, by saving costs on labour and high yields ensure relatively higher profit ranging from Rs. 500 to 600 per hectare.

(c) as indicated under (a) above.

(d) Farmers are favourably responding.

Explorations for Germplasm Collection

239. DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) how many explorations were made for germplasm collection during the last three years by the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources under ICAR;

(b) the significance of such explorations and accession in crops;

(c) how will it benefit the common farmer;

(d) the cost benefit thereof; and

(e) the steps being taken to make its applied use?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) 75 explorations were conducted during last 3 years.

(b) Agro-biodiversity prevalent in the Indian farming system is being threatened with genetic erosion due to fast spread of a few improved varieties/hybrids replacing hundreds of native varieties in all major crop plants. The valuable genetic diversity is being collected through the explorations and conserved for use in crop improvement.

(c) All modern varieties being cultivated by farmers today have been bred by using the valuable characters found in the native germplasm. To serve the farming community continuously with better varieties collection and conservation of rich germplasm of this country is important.

(d) Genetic diversity is very valuable and its value cannot be ascertained. Its conservation at national level will be important. Farmers will benefit with the development of new varieties using this diversity.

(e) The National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources is involved in characterisation and evaluation of this agro-biodiversity so that it could be used for development of improved varieties by Indian scientists which would be eventually provided to the farmers for increasing the production and productivity.

Krishi Vigyan Kendras

240. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state;

(a) the number of Krishi Vigyan Kendras in the country, State-wise;

(b) how many of them are run by NGOs;

(c) whether there is any proposal pending from an NGO of Manipur recommended by Government of Manipur in the matter; and

(d) whether there is any proposal for agricultural information centres in the villages of the country to be operated by NGOs?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) There are 261 Krishi Vigyan Kendras in the country. State-wise list is attached. (see below).

(b) There are 79 Krishi Vigyan Kendras under N.G.Os.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) No, Sir.

Statement

State-wise list of Krishi Vigyan Kendras

SI. No.	State	No. of K.V.Ks
1.	Andaman & Nicobar	01
2.	Andhra Pradesh	17
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	01
4.	Assam	OS
5.	Bihar	18
6.	Delhi	01

SI. No.	State	No. of KV.Ks
7.	Goa	01
8.	Gujarat Haryana	11
9.	Himachal Pradesh	12
10.		09
11.	Jammu & Kashmir	04
12.	Karnataka	11
13.	Kerala	09
14.	Madhya Pradesh	19
15.	Maharashtra	23
16.	Manipur	01
17.	Meghalaya	01
18.	Mizoram	02
19.	Nagaland	01
20.	Orissa	12
21.	Pondicherry	02
22.	Punjab	10
23.	Rajasthan	32
24.	Sikkim	01
25.	Tamilnadu	16
26.	Tripura Uttar	02
27.	Pradesh	30
28.	West Bengal	09
	TOTAL	261

Revival of the sick fertilizer units

241. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS & FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken to revive the sick fertilizer units; and

(b) the details of the extent of funds required for revival of each unit, the funds provided therefor this year, and the expenditure actually incurred so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) and (b) In order to restore the financial health of the two sick fertilizer manufacturing Public Sector Undertakings namely, Fertilizer Corporation of India Ltd. (FCI) and Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Ltd. (HFC), the Government had approved in principle a revival package which envisaged the revamp of Sindri, Ramagundam and Talcher units of FCI; and Durgapur, Barauni and Namrup units of HFC, entailing a fresh investment of Rs. 2201.13 crore at 1994 price levels, apart from capital restructuring and financial reliefs to the undertakings. The funding arrangement for these packages could not be tied up. An expert Group was thereafter constituted to reformulate the revival packages. The Group appointed a consultancy organisation to undertake an independent apparaisal of the technical viability of the revival packages from the standpoint of funding by the Financial Institutions. The consultancy organisation has since submitted its report.

In order to sustain production in the functional units of FCI and HFC, a budgetary support of Rs. 468.34 crore has been provided to these undertakings for the current financial year, against which a sum of Rs. 313.25 crore has so far been released.

Promotion of eudcation among SC & ST girl children

242. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a need to promote eudcation among all classes of students irrespective of caste, group and sex;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to promote education among girl children from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes;

(c) the guidelines issued to the State Governments in this regard; and

(d) the response of the State Governments thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The National Policy on Education of 1986 and its POA as updated in 1992 posits that education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. Equalisation of the educational development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes with the non-Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe population is also an important focus of this policy. The steps taken by the Central and State Governments to promote education among girl children of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes should be seen against the backdrop of this policy statement. Various steps have been taken by Central and State Governments to promote education *interalia* among girls students from Scheduled Castes and